



Friends of the Louisiana Whooping Cranes

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries



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In Memory of A Friend, Colleague, and Whooping Crane Supporter; Thomas J. (Tom) Hess, Jr. 1950-2014



A native of Delaware, Tom Hess first encountered southwest Louisiana's marshes as a student at Rockefeller State Wildlife Refuge in Grand Chenier, Louisiana. Realizing he had found the place of his dreams, Tom, an avid waterfowl hunter and fisherman, vowed to return to the region. In 1972 he began work as a biologist assistant for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) at Rockefeller Refuge. He held a B.S. in Wildlife Management from Louisiana Technical University and later earned an M.S. in Wildlife Management from Louisiana State University. Except for several years as general manager and wetland manager of Little Pecan Island hunting lodge, Tom spent his career as a biologist at Rockefeller Refuge, rising to the position of refuge manager, which he held until his death in March 2014. During his long career with LDWF, Tom worked with wetland management and endangered species. He contributed to the recovery of the state's Brown Pelicans and Bald Eagles and was an ardent supporter of the Louisiana Whooping Crane

reintroduction. His enthusiasm for Louisiana's wetlands, waterfowl, and other wildlife was infectious; he worked well with landowners and other stakeholders and mentored many students and young staff members with his own inimitable blend of leadership, optimism, experience, and humor. In 2011 the Louisiana Wildlife Federation named him Professional Conservationist of the Year. Indicative of Tom's passion for the Louisiana Whooping Cranes is his request that memorial donations be made to the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation, specifically to support the reintroduction project.

Photo and memorial written By Dr. Gay Gomez

Louisiana Whooping Crane Totals As of April 2014: 30/50=60%

<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
Survival: 0/10= 0%	Survival: 11/16= 69%	Survival: 10/14= 71%	Survival: 9/10=90%

As of this publication the Louisiana whooping cranes are reported in Vermilion, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, Rapides, Calcasieu, Evangeline, and Avoyelles Parishes.

Since You Last Read...an Update on the 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 Louisiana Whooping Cranes



L2-13. Photo taken February 2014.

Happy spring to all of our Louisiana whooping crane supporters! There have been several big events since you last read the January issue of the newsletter.

Nine members of the 2013 cohort continue to do well at White Lake and the surrounding vicinity. The birds have left the pen area and as with previous cohorts are expected to expand their range as the marsh dries and they choose to leave to find better habitat. You may recall, we originally had 10 birds in this cohort. The remains of L2-13, a male member of the new cohort, were recovered at White Lake in mid March in a densely vegetated area of the refuge. Predation is likely the cause of death. Unfortunately, this is not unprecedented as predation of juvenile cranes

does occur when they venture into new areas of the marsh they are not as familiar with. The adult male 5-11, that was reported in the last issue as the “pen visitor” continued to become part of the group and eventually won the attention of several young females from this group. To date, he continues to associate with several members of the 2013 cohort which includes multiple females.

LDWF staff were excited to observe pre-copulatory behavior and the building of 2 nests by pair L3-10 & L4-11. This was very encouraging to the project as this was the first time either activity had been observed since the Louisiana reintroduction began. Regrettably, as most of you are aware, the two birds killed in Jefferson Davis parish in February 2014 were these two same birds. The loss of these birds is upsetting in a multitude of aspects including the male being the sole survivor of our 2010 cohort. A \$20,000 dollar reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest of the individual(s) involved in this senseless act.

The public is reminded to call LDWF's Operation Game Thief at 1-800-442-2511 if any criminal acts against whooping cranes or any Louisiana wildlife are observed.

Saving the best news for last, one breeding pair has produced 2 eggs in the wild for the first time in over 75 years on the Louisiana landscape. This is a monumental event for this young pair of cranes. The required incubation time for whooping crane eggs is ~ 30 days.



A monumental event for the Louisiana whooping crane reintroduction project and for the species. The nest and eggs of pair L7 and 8-11. Photo taken March 2014.

Since You Last Read...an Update on the 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013

Louisiana Whooping Cranes

On the 38th day with neither egg hatching, both eggs were collected from the nest in order to relieve the adults from their parental responsibility to non-viable eggs.

We are thrilled with this monumental step for our LA reintroduction program and are proud to say we have a pair of cranes that has produced two eggs and had the practice of incubating full term. We are encouraged by this progress and are hopeful for this pair to produce our first Louisiana hatching next breeding season.

January-March 2014 Friends of the Cranes

A special thanks to our monetary donors, without whom this project would not be possible. The following individuals have made monetary donations to support the reintroduction of whooping cranes to southwest Louisiana. Those names listed with an asterisk indicate a donation in Tom's memory.

Jeffrey Cole, Sport Society for Nature Study, Dr. King Knight, D. Fontenot, L Buckley, K.Granger, Cintmage Productions, Patrick Hebert & Erica Williams*, Paul LeBerg*, Jamie & Amanda Farmer*, The Coastal Club*, Richard B. Crowell*, Robert Love*, M.Beach*, Charlotte Hess *, Mike Olinde*, Jones & Alexander, LLC.*, Sara Zimorski*, South Cameron High School*, Marian Miller Green Trust*, and Randy Moertle*.

Also a **very special thanks** to **Kell McInnis and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation** for administering the distribution of our donated/awarded whooping crane funds. If you or someone you know would like to make a donation in support of the cranes, you can contact Kell at 225-765-5100, kmcinnis@wlf.la.gov, or visit the Foundation's website directly at <http://lawff.org/>

Donations can be mailed directly to the Foundation at P.O. Box 80378 Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0378

North American Crane Supporters Descend Upon Lafayette for the 13th North American Crane Working Group Conference



Secretary Robert Barham announcing the exciting news regarding the Louisiana whooping crane nest and eggs.

The foremost crane experts in North America recently visited southwest Louisiana for the 13th North American Crane Working Group Conference. The conference was held April 14-17 in Lafayette, LA. Louisiana was proud to host this group of professionals for the conference that is held once every three years. Conference presentation topics included updates on Louisiana's whooping crane reintroduction, the wild Aransas/Wood Buffalo whooping crane flock, the technology utilized in crane research, and challenges to crane survival.



One of the best-selling artists in the Gulf Coast area, R. C. Davis shares your desire to repopulate Whooping Cranes in Louisiana. His desire led to his painting of the Whooping Crane entitled "Taking Flight." The LA Wildlife & Fisheries Foundation (LWFF) and Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries (LDWF) have partnered with Mr. Davis in offering reproduction prints of this beautiful work of art for purchase and to increase awareness of this endangered species. With the recent shooting of a pair of cranes, which is the third known shooting incident in Louisiana; the im-

portance of public knowledge regarding the restoration of these birds into their natural habitat is even more pressing. All funds generated from the sales of the R. C. Davis "Taking Flight" prints go directly to the funding Whooping Crane repopulation project.

To this effort LDWF & LWFF have sent over 2,500 letters of solicitation to dental and veterinary offices, and restaurants around the state. The letters themselves serve as outreach and we hope the prints are displayed in public offices to further outreach.

This amazing artwork is available for your purchase to enjoy its beauty, aid in funding the repopulation project, and bring about public awareness. Purchases may be made online (<http://lawff.org/poster.html>), by calling (225)765-2811, or by completing and mailing the form below to LWFF, PO Box 80378, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0378.

We encourage all of you receiving this newsletter to consider purchase and display in support of this reintroduction.



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The Foundation's Mission:

- Promote, develop, expand and improve the facilities of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission;
- Enhance their ability to perform their constitutional and statutory missions;
- Encourage public conservation and enjoyment of wildlife and fish resources;
- Increase Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission's usefulness to our citizens.

For more detailed information on the Whooping Crane project visit:
www.wlf.louisiana.gov/wildlife/whooping-crane

The *Taking Flight* canvas is limited to an edition size of 75 to be signed and numbered by the artist and the 21"x 32" paper has an edition size of 500 to be signed and numbered by the artist as well. The 12"x 20" paper size is an open edition print.

Quantity	Item	unit cost	amount
_____	12" X 20" paper	\$45.00	_____
_____	21" X 32" paper	\$100.00	_____
_____	22" X 36" canvas	\$500.00	_____
			subtotal _____
			sales tax _____
			shipping and handling \$9.95
			total _____

Order online at: www.lawff.org or complete the information below and mail to:
Louisiana Wildlife & Fisheries Foundation, PO Box 80378, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-0378

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